

Bacterial Vaginosis

Every female has bacteria that normally live in the vagina. Bacterial vaginosis (BV) is caused by an imbalance of the bacteria. BV is not a sexually transmitted infection (STI), but it's more common in sexually active females.

How do I get BV?

BV may be linked to having:

- multiple sex partners (male or female)
- a new sex partner
- oral, vaginal, or anal sex without a condom

BV may also be linked to douching.

How do I know I have BV?

Some females might not know they have BV. Females with BV may have:

- foul or fishy smelling discharge from the vagina
- itching or burning in the vagina
- change in colour (e.g., gray, white, yellow) and amount of vaginal discharge

The best way to find out if you have BV is to get tested. Your nurse or doctor can test you by taking a swab from your vagina.

Is BV harmful?

BV can sometimes get better without treatment. Other times, BV can cause serious health problems.

BV increases your chances of getting an STI.

If you have a pelvic procedure (e.g., IUD insertion, abortion), BV can increase your risk of getting a pelvic infection.

What if I'm pregnant?

If you're pregnant, BV can increase your risk of having a preterm delivery, miscarriage, or infection after delivery.

How is BV treated?

BV is treated with antibiotics. It's important to follow the treatment directions and finish your medicine, even if your symptoms go away.

If your symptoms don't go away or come back, see your nurse or doctor.

Do males get BV?

No. A male doesn't need to be treated if his partner has BV.

For More Information

- STI/HIV Information Line: 1-800-772-2437
- www.myhealth.alberta.ca
- www.sexgerms.com



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